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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 000373

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/FO, AF/RSA, AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/09/2019

TAGS: PREL PGOV RW CG AU

SUBJECT: AU SUMMIT -- AF ACTING A/S CARTER MEETS WITH RWANDA FOREIGN MINISTER

REF: KINSHASA 98

Classified By: Ambassador Donald Yamamoto, reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: On February 2, on the margins of the African Union Summit, AF Acting Assistant Secretary Phillip Carter met Rwanda's Foreign Minister, Rosemary Museminali, to discuss the Rwandan role in stabilizing Eastern Congo. They recognized the need for a delicate balance in managing the human rights dimension of resolving the crisis and of securing justice. The Foreign Minister emphasized Rwanda does not anticipate a lengthy involvement in ongoing military operations and agreed the peace process must evolve with the collaboration of DRC factions. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Museminali said the participation of the Rwandan military in operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) against the Rwandan rebel group Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) has established a situation on the ground that is increasingly stable and will enhance the ability of the DRC government to protect civilians. The hope is this operation will mark a new era in the Kivus, and in the long-term, will result in economic development. Museminali made clear Rwanda appreciated U.S. support, and stressed that necessity had dictated the decision to move forward with Rwandan intervention. She made clear there is a limited window of opportunity for weakening the FDLR, and made clear there are no guarantees of success, although she was optimistic. Carter stressed the United States will continue to support and encourage DRC-Rwandan cooperation and dialogue, and hopes inevitable problems will not derail progress.

¶3. (C) Asked why the present operations were successful, Museminali said the political leadership of Rwanda and the DRC had come together after a series of failures with the realization that cooperation is essential. This operation is the culmination of careful planning -- it is not simply waging a war of attrition against the FDLR. Its aim is the restoration of control by the DRC and has, as a component, addressing the various, legitimate interests of the militias and other groups. It also recognizes the humanitarian components as integral to the overall operation, and has a goal of creating the possibility for refugees to repatriate. Above all, the current operations are predicated on the assumption that the government of the DRC owns the problem, as well as the solution. This is a comprehensive joint operation in which the DRC has primacy.

¶4. (C) Museminali said the priority for the moment is peace and security. This includes creating conditions that lead to the defection, demobilization, and voluntary repatriation of

FDLR soldiers in addition to the dissolution of community support for the FDLR. The priority for the future is regional development and regional cooperation, as well as an effective political process that rests on open dialogue. Museminali pointed to ongoing discussions in the region aimed at resuscitating economic development, speaking specifically of power generation, telecommunications, and the exploitation of mineral resources. She believes the Economic Conference of Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) creates a supportive environment for discussions of regional cooperation and development. Carter stressed the United States looks forward to collaboration, dialogue, and exchanges replacing a vicious with a virtuous cycle. Museminali noted that Rwanda's presence in Eastern Congo was more an "intelligence operation" more than a military one. The Rwandans are expending significant effort on non-military means to encourage the alienation of the FDLR from Congolese Hutu groups and to split the FDLR itself.

¶5. (C) Regarding human rights in the DRC, Museminali said it will require great skill to maintain a delicate balance with security. Carter cautioned that, given the visibility of human rights violations and the apprehension of Nkunda, the manner in which justice is meted out will be very important, particularly if the DRC wishes to avoid inflaming inter-ethnic conflicts and to prevent stories from gaining a life of their own in the international press. A transparent, fair judicial process that defuses legitimate concerns raised by international human rights activists is essential. Museminali said she favors delinking FDLR-related human rights issues from the current situation, given the danger of

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initiating something that is unmanageable and which could exacerbate ethnic tensions.

¶6. (U) Acting A/S Carter approved this message.
YAMAMOTO